



EOD team responds; disposes explosives found

Story by Spc. James P. Hunter
MNC-I PAO

Servicemembers with explosive ordnance disposal teams respond to and dispose of improvised explosive devices, unexploded ordnance and caches.

For the last four months, the 53rd EOD team has provided emergency response to the An Najaf and Al Hillah areas.

Often, the team finds artillery projectiles, tank rounds and other high-explosive ordnance in Iraq.

"If these things are cracked open and exposed to the weather, it can change them," said Pfc. Christopher J. Wesel, 53rd EOD.

When UXO's are exposed to the elements, they become sensitive to the point where moving the ordnance could cause it to go off, he added.

March 2, the 53rd EOD team was called in response to ordnance found in Hydaria.

The EOD team convoyed deep into the desert where few villages stood.

The families living in the area stared as the American convoy located the grid coordinates of the UXO's.

Some ordnance could be seen above the ground, but, for the most part, the ordnance was buried in the sand.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. James P. Hunter

The 53rd Explosive Ordnance Disposal team stacked unexploded ordnances in Hydaria, Mar. 2. The team extracts and disposes of unexploded ordnances in the An Najaf and Al Hillah regions.

Some ordnance was even found in the wall of an old Iraqi home. The family living on the land was asked if they knew where the rounds came from.

They said they were unsure. Their land was for farming and the only people they've seen in their area were the U.S. troops who found the UXO's.

Altogether, the EOD team found and disposed of nearly 250 ordnances. 200 of the found UXO's were 90mm High-Explosive Squash Heads.

The team became suspicious when they unburied some of the UXO's. They were wrapped in plastics bags to protect them from the weather, which means someone was protecting them for later use, said Bond.

On many different occasions, the 53rd EOD team has responded to recover ordnance when they were needed.

Nearly a year and a half ago, a U.S. bomb was dropped during heavy combat operations in An Najaf.

The bomb went into a building, down three floors and seated itself into a cement wall and did not explode. For the next year and a half, the bomb sat.

The mayor of An Najaf reported there was an unexploded ordnance near the holy shrine of Imam Ali, Jan. 15.

"We have a big bomb behind the holy shrine and this position is very dangerous. We have no technical ability to extract this bomb from the deep area," the

mayor said in a letter he wrote to U.S. forces. "Please, we need help to extract this bomb in cooperation with the Iraqi experts."

The 53rd EOD was called in to defuse, extract and rid the bomb.

"We had to be very solemn and quick about what we did," Wesel said.

When the team was able to defuse the bomb, the Iraqi EOD team unearthed the 2,000 pound bomb and moved it to a secured location.

The team received word the bomb had been moved to a different location and immediately re-located the bomb to a safe place and disposed of it, Feb. 25.

"The longer it was there, the longer it was endangering people's lives," he added. "(This bomb) could have turned a holy day into the biggest tragedy in Iraq in an instance."

The EOD team has the opportunity to deal with many unexploded ordnances during their deployment.

"Iraq has been a battlefield for centuries. There are so many ordnances just lying out there," Wesel said. "If you were to just walk in the desert, you would find something. It may have been there two weeks or two years. There are sub muni see EXPLOSIVES, page 3

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SJA reimburses Iraqis for damage

Story by Spc. James P. Hunter
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Once a month, Soldiers from the Multi-National Corps-Iraq Staff Judge Advocate Office travel to the International Zone in central Baghdad to file claims and refund Iraqis for their losses.

Many of the Iraqi's land and homes have been left destroyed in the aftermath of battles taking place between insurgents and coalition forces.

Some of the claims reported by the Iraqis are true, said Capt. Ryan Dunmire, chief of client services, MNC-I SJA. Their homes were destroyed because of the fighting over the last three years.

For the most part though, many of the Iraqi reports are false, Dunmire added.

Representatives from the SJA office traveled to the IZ to settle Iraqi claims Feb. 25, but with the recent curfew throughout Baghdad, due to the tense situation between the Sunni's and Shiite's, only five Iraqis showed up.

"Under the Foreign Claims Act, as implemented in (Army Regulation) 27-20, chapter 10, we pay the Iraqis for damage we caused. The biggest hurdle for the Iraqis is explaining what combat means. We will not pay for collateral damage, or innocent bystanders that were hurt because of a combat activity," Dunmire said.

"Throughout Iraq, there are foreign claims commissions, Dunmire continued. "What we do is take in the claim from an Iraqi claimant, which states what happened, by who and how much they want compensated for it."

When they enter, they are seated and an interpreter files their claims as they wait to be called upon.

The SJA representatives call them in one at a time to discuss the matter through an interpreter. They take all the information gathered and store it in a database until further review.

The judge advocate assigned to the case reviews it.

By contacting the unit involved in the incident or through past significant actions, the judge advocate determines whether or not the losses or damages are deemed payable.

"The claims process that is established is for the benefit of the Iraqi people. It is something that is unique and very often unappreciated," Dunmire said.

Most claims are made because of raids, unlawful shootings or vehicle accidents involving coalition convoys.

One of the Iraqi men SJA visited with was following-up on a previous claim he made. In 2004, the man was traveling from Syria to deliver bananas in Iraq. He stopped in front of Abu Ghraib Prison because his tire was flat and went into Baghdad to have it repaired. The man had three vehicles full of bananas. When he came back, his trucks had been shot and were on fire. He lost his entire bundle and possible profit from his delivery.

He said he lost nearly \$95,000 in the apparent coalition attack. SJA could only offer him a certain amount, which seemed to dishearten the man.

He tried to persuade the SJA representatives to give him more. Because of his loss and his many travels from Syria to Baghdad to check on his claim, the man had become ill and the amount they offered him would only pay off his medical bills. After the investigation into his claim, by law the amount they offered was the most he could

receive.

Finally after 30 minutes of back and forth debate, the Syrian agreed to the amount and left with a bit of satisfaction.

Dealing with another incident, an Iraqi couple came in to follow-up on a claim they filed.

Coalition Forces received reports that insurgents were staying within their household.

On four separate occasions, coalition forces raided their home, moving from room-to-room and busting down doors looking for insurgents. The couple's home was destroyed. They wanted to receive money for their losses, however; they could not be refunded because the raid was based on information possibly leading to the detaining of anti-coalition forces.

"I follow the law and pay or deny accordingly," Dunmire said. "We don't deal with the Iraqi politician or the insurgent wanting to harm us. As I like to phrase it, we are on the forefront of victory."

Dunmire feels Iraqi people are very similar to Americans.

"There is the parent who doesn't believe that their child is up to no good. There is the son who lost his father and does not want money, but asserts that all he wants is a trial and justice," he added. "Like us, they like more money, but surprisingly (they) understand when we cannot pay."

Dunmire often feels remorse when he cannot pay the Iraqis for their losses.

"Accidents occur and collateral damage is a fact of armed conflict," he added.

Dunmire said he hopes Iraqis continue to report claims because he understands what they are going through and will do all he can to help them during their time of need.

Camp Victory Three-day forecast

Sunday



Mostly Sunny
High: 76 F
Low: 54 F

Monday



Mostly Sunny
High: 77 F
Low: 54 F

Tuesday



Mostly Sunny
High: 80 F
Low: 54 F

Nutritional Supplements –

Understanding the effects and risk using performance-enhancing agents

Information provided by Lt. Col. Brett Kelly and Lt. Cmdr. Gene Garland

MNC-I Surgeon's Office

Nutritional supplements encompass a wide variety of products, including vitamins and natural health remedies. In the United States, the sale of nutritional supplements is a multi-billion dollar industry. Some nutritional supplements are beneficial, particularly in individuals who cannot achieve the necessary caloric intake or sustenance through their regular diet due to illness such as cancer.

Beware of the supplements advertised for purchase. The marketers of these products tout the benefits of their own particular brand but frequently do not have evidence to back their claims. With more than 300 nutritional supplements containing combinations of up to 200 different unique ingredients, selecting an appropriate product can confuse the average consumer. Consumers often rely on education about the products from unqualified individuals. Information found in popular athletic magazines is often biased and misleading. In fact, almost two-thirds of nutritional supplements advertised have little or no scientific research demonstrating actual benefit.

Some of the most popular products promote the benefits of amino acids, creatine, clenbuterol, perfluorocarbons, and sodium bicarbonate. When used properly, some products may have positive results. Individual results are influenced by many factors, such as activity level, overall diet, age, and other variables. Novice users should understand that competitive athletes usually consult professional trainers and dietitians who tailor their regimen to achieve individualized goals. Results vary greatly; however, even when used properly, professional athletes can only expect a one-half to

five percent improvement in performance. For most amateur athletes, a well balanced diet coupled with a sensible workout routine will achieve similar results.

Nutritional supplements are not regulated by the FDA. Most supplements marketed for weight lifters have little or no proven benefit with the exception of creatine. Despite the fact that ephedrine containing supplements have been removed from the market, many supplements still contain potentially harmful ingredients such as high concentrations of caffeine or stimulants. Caffeine is a diuretic which accelerates dehydration. Other side effects from stimulants include raising your blood pressure and causing abnormal heart rhythms. Several problems associated with dietary supplements have surfaced in the deployed theater. Reported problems include abnormal heart rhythms and mental status changes. Nutritional supplements with caffeine or other stimulants also put you at higher risk of becoming a heat casualty. Individuals taking supplements should at the minimum reduce their risk by drinking extra water.

The bottom line is the potential short-term physical gain associated with the use of nutritional supplements is not worth the long-term consequences that they can inflict on your body. Nutritional supplements are a needless expense considering that all your nutritional needs can be achieved through a balanced diet at no charge from your local dining facility. If you insist on taking dietary supplements, avoid those containing high levels of caffeine or other stimulants (i.e. Yohimbine, Ginseng). Also, nutritional supplements may be beneficial in some situations, but they are probably unnecessary for most people. Talk to your healthcare provider about your fitness and nutritional goals before making decisions regarding nutritional supplements.

EXPLOSIVES —

tions that have been there since Operation Desert Storm.”

With unexploded ordnances piling up in the desert, IED's remain a major threat to troops also, he said.

When a patrol is out and a suspected explosive device is found, the patrol must secure the area to ensure no person gets close to the site. The information is then called in to report the bombs location, the type of bomb, who is on site, its hazards and the security measures taken.

The EOD team gathers the information, their equipment and moves on site to locate and dispose of the ordnance.

When the team is called in to dispose of an ordnance, We-

sel said the key is to stay focused.

“I’m focused on what needs to be done. If there is an IED, and I’m looking down-range toward the IED... I’m focused,” he said. “I need to know where this IED is and once I find the IED I need to stop it.”

“When it’s me versus the bomb, it’s a different realm. Everything else just fades into the background,” Bond added. “You think about all your training and what you need to do as you approach the bomb. You get there, you do what needs to be done and you walk away.”

An experience that Wesel remembers the most was when



Video still by Sgt. Edward T. Conning
The 53rd EOD neutralizes unexploded ordnances in Hydaria, March 2.

his team responded to an IED, Jan. 5. Five service-members died in the blast.

“It taught me how effective IED’s are, how much damage they can do and how much of an

impact they have on a unit when someone gets hit,” he said.

He also feels the experience showed him it will take a lot of effort from an EOD team to preserve the lives of coalition forces.

There are a lot of people who are unaware of how to deal with IED’s, Wesel added.

“People need to realize how important it is that they follow procedures exactly when

it comes to dealing with IED’s. Yes, lives can be lost. Just because one bomb blew up, doesn’t mean the rest of the area is cleared,” Wesel said. “It’s more dangerous than they realize. It’s not going to be obvious. When it happens, they’re not going to see it coming.”

As much training as a servicemember can do to recognize IED’s, they are constantly changing, he said. The way an IED looks and the way it is set off is only limited to the imagination of the builder. An IED can be anything.

“If they don’t want you to see them, you won’t. If they want you to see them, you will. Sometimes it’s a bag of trash and sometimes it’s not,” Wesel added. “At times you’re the target and at times you’re not.”

Operating hours

Coalition Cafe

Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dinner 5:30 - 8 p.m.
Midnight Dining 11 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Sports Oasis

Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dinner 5:30 - 9 p.m.

Shopette

Open 24 Hours

Camp Liberty Post Exchange

Everyday 8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Fitness Center

Open 24 Hours

Chapel (Bldg. 31)

Sunday:

Protestant Service 7 and 8:45 a.m.
Catholic Mass 10:30 a.m.
Gospel Service Noon
Mormon (LDS) 2 p.m.
Episcopal 4 p.m.
Full Life Service 6 p.m.

Saturday:

7th Day Adventist 11 a.m.
Catholic Mass 8 p.m.
Mini-Chapel (Bldg. 2)

Friday:

Jewish Service 6:30 p.m.
Eastern Orthodox services:

Saturday:

Vespers 5 p.m.
Confession 5:30 p.m.
Bible Study 7 p.m.

Sunday:

Divine Liturgy 9 a.m.

Post Office

Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday - 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Sunday 1 - 5 p.m.

Golby Troop Medical Clinic

Sick Call Hours:

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

Dental Sick Call:

Monday - Friday 7:30 - 10:30 a.m.
Saturday 9 - 10:30 a.m.

Mental Health Clinic:

Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. - noon

Post Deployment Health Briefings:

Monday - Friday 1 p.m.

Pharmacy:

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

Client Services


Saturday - Thursday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Friday 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Personnel Service Support Centers

Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

ID Cards

Monday - Friday
9 a.m. - 5 p.m.




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Time: 3 - 5 p.m.

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Selected personnel will perform and compete for prizes in the 2006 Women's History Month Talent Competition

For additional information email Staff Sgt. Jayson Sims at jayson.sims@iraq.centcom.mil or Sgt. 1st Class Marjorie Irby at marjorie.irby@iraq.centcom.mil. DSN 822-4712.



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Submit letters from home

Is your loved one deployed in support of Multi National Corps-Iraq? Would you like to write him or her a message in the Victory Times? Send messages, three to four lines of text to brian.anderson@iraq.centcom.mil. Ensure to include Soldiers name, rank, and unit.

Victory Times welcomes columns, commentaries, articles and letters from our readers. Send submissions or comments to brian.anderson@iraq.centcom.mil. We reserve the right to edit for security, accuracy, propriety, policy, clarity and space.

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This driver was wearing his seat belt, driving within the speed limit and he was in his proper lane.



The driver of this vehicle had his life tragically altered by a reckless driver.

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